

## **House Education Committee**

### **Draft Procedural Guidelines - 2013**

#### **I. Hearings on Proposed Legislation**

##### **A. Hearing process**

1. At the time set for hearing, the Chair will recognize the sponsor of the bill who will open the testimony.
2. Proponents of the bill will present testimony.
3. Opponents of the bill will present testimony.
4. Informational witnesses will present testimony.
5. Committee members will ask questions of those who testified. All questions will be directed through the Chair.
6. All discussion will begin and end at the direction of the Chair.
7. The sponsor of the bill will close the presentation following questions from the committee.

##### **B. Procedures for witnesses**

1. All witnesses must sign the witness sheet before presenting testimony.
2. Proponents and opponents should try to state new points of testimony only. Witnesses who agree with points already made should state their agreement with the position.
3. Witnesses presenting testimony should remain in the room to answer any questions from committee members until the hearing is closed.
4. Written copies of testimony presented by a witness may also be submitted for the permanent committee record.

##### **C. General guidelines**

1. Everyone will act and be treated in a courteous manner.
2. The Chair shall maintain order within the committee room.
3. Cell phones must be turned off or placed on silent mode in the hearing room, except in cases of emergency.
4. The use of cameras, television, radio, or videotaping equipment is allowed in a committee hearing, but the Chair of the committee may designate areas appropriate for use.
5. Testimony requiring the use of video, audio, or other equipment will be permitted at the discretion of the Chair if arrangements are made in advance.

#### **II. Executive Session**

- A. In general, executive action will not be held the same day as the public hearing on the bill, unless the bill is uncontroversial.
- B. Executive sessions are open to the public, but discussion is limited to committee members. Members of the public may be asked questions by committee members at the discretion of the Chair.

- C. Absentee voting by committee members is permitted in writing through the use of a standard vote. **(NOTE: The committee's decision regarding proxies must be reflected in the minutes).**
- D. Motions by committee members do not require a second.

### **III. Amendments**

- A. Suggested amendments to a bill should be requested in writing at least 24 hours before executive session, but staff may require additional time for complex or lengthy requests.
- B. Conceptual amendments should be limited. Amendments must be drafted by staff in advance to ensure time for preparation, review, editing, and distribution. If a minor conceptual amendment is allowed, staff must be afforded the opportunity to make technical corrections and edits.
- C. No lobbyist amendments should be requested directly of staff without the written approval of a legislator.
- D. Committee members are the only legislators who can move amendments to a bill while the bill is in committee.
- E. Pursuant to Article V, section 11 of the Montana Constitution, amendments must be within the title of the bill.